

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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R 081505Z OCT 75

FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8518

DIA WASHDC

INFO AMEMBASSY CAIRO

CINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AVIV 6391

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MOPS, IS, EG

SUBJECT: IDF VIEW OF INTERIM AGREEMENT

1. DURING OCTOBER 3 TOUR OF SINAI PASSES AND OIL FIELDS, AMBASSADOR WAS BRIEFED BY ESCORT OFFICER (BG DOV SION, IDF SPOKESMAN) ON NEW LINES AND POSITIONS TO RESULT FROM IMPLEMENTATION OF SINAI II. HIS APPROACH TO AGREEMENT WAS POSITIVE. SION MADE ONE POINT WHICH WE HAD NOT HEARD PUT IN EXACTLY THE SAME WAY BEFOREPM HE SAID THAT AGREEMENT WAS A GOOD ONE IN THAT IT ENHANCED THE DEFENSIVE POSITIONS OF BOTH EGYPT AND SRAEL.

2. ACCORDING TO SION, EGYPT BENEFITS FROM THE ACQUISITION OF MORE DEPTH (3-5 KM AVERAGE) ON EAST BANK OF CANAL WHICH EMHAMCES HER ABILITY TO DEFEND CANAL, AND ASSOCIATED POPULATION CENTERS, FROM ISRAELI ATTACK. EGYPT ALSO BENEFITS FROM THE ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL FROM THE PASSES AND THE EAST SHORE OF THE GULF OF SUEZ.

3. SION DID NOT IDENTIFY ANY ASPECT OF THE NEW LINES THAT EXCLUSIVELY BENEFITED ISRAEL'S DEFENSIVE POSTURE, BUT MADE POINT THAT CERTAIN ELEMENTS IN AGREEMENT OF MUTUAL
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BENEFIT TO BOTH SIDES ARE OF SUCH

IMPORTANCE THAT RESULT

WILL BE TO IMPROVE ISRAEL'S (AND EGYPT'S) DEFENSES. THESE ELEMENTS INCLUDE: (A) THE PRESENCE OF U.S. TECHNICIANS (IN ADDITION TO UNEF); (B) THE SURVEILLANCE STATIONS; AND, (C) MUTUAL AERIAL RECONNAISSANCE OF DISENGAGEMENT AREA. IN SION'S VIEW, THESE ELEMENTS WILL COMBINE TO REDUCE TENSION AND INCREASE MUTUAL CONFIDENCE.

4. SION SAID HE WOULD PERSONALLY HAVE PREFERRED TO SEE IDF STAY IN PASSES, BUT RECOGNIZED THAT WITHDRAWAL WAS PROBABLY NECESSARY TO OBTAIN AGREEMENT. HE FELT THAT ISRAEL'S NEW POSITIONS A EASTERN END OF PASSES WOULD BE SATISFACTORY. HE STRESSED FACT THAT ISRAEL IS MAN-POWER LIMITED AND RELIES UPON A MILITIA ARMY. THIS MEANS THAT ECONOMY OF FORCE IS A KEY CONSIDERATION FOR IDF. SION MADE POINT THAT ANY FURTHER WITHDRAWAL TO EAST WOULD HAVE REQUIRED GREATLY INCREASED IDF STANDING FORCES IN ORDER TO BE PREPARED TO CONTAIN AN EGYPTIAN ARMORED THRUST INTO THE LEVEL GROUND EAST OF PASSES. WITH THE AGREED POSITIONS, HOWEVER, SION IS CONFIDENT THAT IDF CAN CONTROL THE PASSES WITH MINIMAL FORCES--INFANTRY AND ARTILLERY. IN FACT, SION CLAIMED ISRAEL WILL BE ABLE TO MAN THE LONGER NEW LINE WITH ESSENTIALLY THE SAME FORCES AS AT PRESENT.

5. IN SION'S VIEW, THE WIDENED BUFFER ZONE IS PERHAPS THE MOST IMPORTANT MILITARY FEATURE OF AGREEMENT AND IS OF MUTUAL BENEFIT TO BOTH SIDES. HE SEES THE INCREASED INSULATION BETWEEN OPPOSING FORCES AS REDUCING POSSIBILITY OF INCIDENTS/CONFRONTATIONS AND THUS CONTRIBUTING TO DECREASED TENSION AND INCREASED CONFIDENCE. HE STRESSED FACT, SEVERAL TIMES, THAT WIDENED BUFFER ZONE WAS ESPECIALLY SIGNIFICANT IN THAT IT HELPED IN EFFORT TO ESTABLISH THE PRINCIPLE OF A DEMILITARIZED SINAI.
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